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REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTICES.

Progress in Language, with special reference to English. By OTTO JESPERSEN, Ph. Dr., Professor of English in the University of Copenhagen. London, Swan Sonnenschein & Co. New York, Macmillan & Co., 1894. Pp. xii, 370. \$1.90.

The work whose title is given above is interesting to the student of language, but cannot be called either *bahnbrechend* or *epochmachend*. The author may be denominated "a free lance in the field of philology," who sets himself to tilt against the views of the recognized masters in the science of language, and to overthrow what have been heretofore regarded as well-established positions in that science. The work, however, is unsystematic, and might have been divided into two, one of which would embrace chapters I-V, with which chapter IX should go as an appendix, and the other, chapters VI-VIII, the former treating of language in general, and the latter of specific points in English grammar. This may be seen from the titles of the several chapters as given below: I. Introduction; II. Ancient and Modern Languages; III. Primitive Grammar; IV. The History of Chinese and of Word-Order; V. The Development of Language; VI. English Case-Systems, Old and Modern; VII. Case-Shiftings in the Pronouns; VIII. The English Group-Genitive; IX. Origin of Language. The author tells us that the work "is to a certain extent an English translation of my *Studier over Engelske Casus*," with omissions and additions. The three chapters on English grammar are given "as specimens of the manner in which I hope, by-and-by, to treat the most important points in the development of English grammar; a few more chapters of the same description are nearly ready, dealing chiefly with the relations between adjectives and nouns (or first parts of compounds) and those between nouns and verbs." We are glad to hear this, for we regard these chapters as the most useful and practical part of the book, and if the author will continue his work and cover the whole ground, he will deserve the thanks of all students of English.

The Introduction gives the author's point of view, and we shall endeavor to present a brief résumé of it. The opening sentence shows the connection of English with the general subject: "No language is better suited than English to the purposes of the student who wishes, by means of historical investigation, to form an independent opinion on the life and development of language in general." While this is very true, it is doubtful whether it will lead to the general conclusions as to the science of language that the author has deduced.

Friederich Müller is quoted as to "the distinguishing traits of the languages of the Arian [I should prefer *Aryan*] type," and the question is asked, "Is modern English superior or inferior to primitive Arian?" The author thinks that the answer cannot be doubtful, but that it is "the exact opposite of what

an older generation of linguists would have given as their verdict"; and he proceeds to controvert this verdict as represented by the views of August Schleicher, whom he styles "the spiritual father of every comparative philologist of our own times"; for his ideas "form the basis alike of Max Müller's brilliant paradoxes and of Whitney's sober reasonings." As illustrating Schleicher's views the author takes up the well-known morphological classification of languages as *isolating*, *agglutinating* and *flexional*, which Schleicher regarded as representing "three stages of linguistic development," and discusses it at considerable length. Now, while Schleicher did not originate this classification, for it has been attributed to Pott, after Wilhelm von Humboldt, and to August Wilhelm Schlegel, he accepted it, and so have later philologists done. Max Müller's views will be found in his *Lectures*, First Series, Lect. VIII, p. 286 (Amer. ed. of 1870), and Whitney's, in his 'Language, etc.,' Lect. X, p. 360, and he adds: "No better scheme of division, of a simple and comprehensive character, has been devised than this, and it is likely to maintain itself long in use. It faithfully represents, in the main, three successive stages in the history of language, three ascending grades of linguistic development."

George Curtius, too (whose lectures on Comparative Grammar the writer had the pleasure of attending some years ago) adopted this classification, but both Schleicher and Curtius held that there is no historical proof that inflectional languages ever were agglutinative or isolating, or that agglutinative languages ever were isolating; that these are not three stages of the same language, but three distinct forms of development as seen in *existing* languages. Hovelacque, however, goes a step further and says that "all linguistic systems have passed through this monosyllabic period"; but he adds that "it must, doubtless, be removed back to extremely remote prehistoric ages, and in all probability it succeeded itself to a still more primitive period during which the roots were formed by the cohesion of the simple phonetic elements" (*Science of Language*, Amer. ed., pp. 32, 33). Pezzi, too, well summarizes these views without dissent (*Introduction à l'étude de la science du langage*, French ed., pp. 121-2). Pezzi calls these stages "trois périodes de formation par lesquelles toutes les langues *doivent* passer pour atteindre les formes les plus riches, les plus synthétiques et les plus artistiques." This coincides with Schleicher's view, who regards the movement of languages in historical times as tending "only downhill," "nothing but retrogression and decay," and this feeling Jespersen regards as "but a grammar-school admiration, a Renaissance love of the two classical languages and their literatures." It is this view that he sets himself to combat, and he argues that the forms of the modern languages show progress rather than decay. But if we regard "the practical interests of the speaking (or talking) community," the only test of the comparative merits of languages—he thinks with Wilhelm von Humboldt—is that "that language ranks highest which goes farthest in the art of accomplishing much with little means, or, in other words, which is able to express the greatest amount of meanings with the simplest mechanism" (p. 13). He supports this view with quotations from Rask, Madvig, Grimm, Kräuter, Osthoff, and E. Tegnér, who says: "so far from being more perfect than both the other groups, the flexional languages are radically inferior to them because they impede liberty of

thought." But "as the great majority of living linguists are in many respects still in the toils of Schleicher's system," the author proceeds to emancipate them through the four chapters following, beginning with the comparison of ancient and modern languages, based on a preference for English *had* over Gothic *habaidédeima*. Now, all English-speaking people will readily concede that *to them* the absence of inflections is a great advantage, but whether the Goth experienced any more difficulty in the expression of his thoughts by means of the various inflections of *habaida* than the Englishman by means of the simple *had* for all persons and numbers—leaving out of view the second person singular, which still holds on with an incorrigible persistence—may well be doubted.

It seems to me that two things are confused in this method of argument—form and utility. Every classical scholar will hold that the fuller inflections of the older Aryan languages show greater perfection of form *per se* than the simpler inflections of the modern languages, but he will not deny that the latter are equally as useful in the expression of thought. It is simply a question of words whether we regard the reduction of longer to shorter forms as retrogression or progression. In the case of English we know historically that this simplicity of forms has resulted from the wearing away of terminations and the contraction of roots, and if this is not "phonetic decay," what is it? Modern English is the result of centuries of change acting upon the fuller forms of a thousand years ago, and so with other modern Aryan languages. But suppose we compare Chinese and Greek, for example. Will the author hold that the former is in any respect equal to the latter in the expression of varying shades of thought and feeling? (See chapter IV.)

The author is much enamored with the word-order of the modern languages, and asks, "What is the direction of change in languages *as they actually exist*?" and secondly, "Is this or is it not a direction towards progress?" From the preceding argument he naturally answers the latter question in the affirmative, and considers that "The substitution of word-order for flexions means a victory of spiritual over material agencies" (p. 111). This may well be doubted. The material agency in Latin, for example, aided the spiritual, and it may well be argued that "*Arma virumque cano*" is superior from many points of view to "I sing of arms and the hero."

We have not space to follow the author's argument in detail. It is summed up in the opening sentence of chapter V on "the development of language": "languages seem to be on the whole constantly progressive, not only with regard to the development of their vocabulary, where nobody ever denied it, but also in grammar, where philologists of the old school were able to see only decay and retrogression." This chapter is devoted to an onslaught on the morphological theory itself, and the conclusion is reached (p. 121) that "the old theory which imagined the prehistoric development of Arian speech from roots through agglutination to flexion is untenable." But many holders of the morphological theory do not agree with Hovelacque that "all linguistic systems have passed through this monosyllabic period." They simply use this classification as a convenient designation of an actual state of things, and do not imagine that our Aryan ancestors "talked in roots." The author well says that "if, in historic times, we find definite and comprehensive laws of

evolution, we cannot help assuming the same laws as valid for prehistoric times as well." The direction of change is from the "longer, more complicated, more concrete, and more irregular" forms, to the "shorter, fewer, simpler, more abstract, and more regular." "We seem, therefore, justified in believing that the pre-Arian languages spoken in a remote past by our ancestors were still more complicated than the oldest languages we are now acquainted with"; and as "on every point our investigation has led us to scepticism with regard to the system of the old school of philology," we finally reach the conclusion, *contra* Schleicher, which the author prints in small capitals: "The evolution of language shows a progressive tendency from inseparable irregular conglomerations to freely and regularly combinable short elements." He does not think that his "theory of the progressive tendency and direction of language has been expounded before by any one"; he finds the nearest approach to it in Prof. Sayce's works, and acknowledges the great influence they have had upon him, but Sayce "is in some very important points as much warped by prejudices as most other philologists." For example, he says, "the history of the noun is one of continuous decay," whereas, according to Jespersen, it is all progress; there is no decay. Jespersen rightly thinks that, if his theory is true, "it must also throw some light on that vexed question, the origin of language"; and logically the chapter on that subject should come in just here, but he interrupts the discussion to interject three chapters on special points of English grammar. We shall not follow this arrangement, but skip to the last chapter.

After briefly summarizing and discarding the older theories, the author proceeds to "look out for new methods and new ways," and suggests two, "one of these has its starting-point in the language of children," and the other is "to trace our modern nineteenth-century languages as far back in time as history and our materials will allow us; and then . . . to deduce definite laws for the development of languages in general, and to try and find a system of lines which can be lengthened backwards beyond the reach of history." The subject is treated in three sections—*sounds*, *grammar* and *vocabulary*.

As to *sounds*, "we observe everywhere the tendency to make pronunciation more easy, so as to lessen the muscular effort"; also, "we find a gradual disappearance of differences of musical accent (or pitch)"; and, as to sentence-melody, "the speech of uncivilised and primitive man was more passionately agitated than ours, more like music or song"; and lastly, "linguistic evolution seems constantly to display a tendency to shorten words"; so Jespersen arrives at the conclusion, *contra* Max Müller and Whitney, having no fear of the latter's "bull of excommunication," as he calls it, that "we must imagine primitive language as consisting (chiefly at least) of very long words, containing many difficult sounds, and sung rather than spoken."

As to *grammar*, reasoning back from the modern analytic tendency, we do not reach *synthesis*, for that implies putting together elements that had an independent existence, and this Jespersen denies, but we reach entanglement or complication: "primitive linguistic units must have been much more complicated in point of meaning, as well as much longer in point of sound." Also, "primitive language no doubt had a superabundance of irregularities and anomalies, in syntax and word-formation not less than in accidence."

Finally, as to *vocabulary*, "the old words spoke more immediately to the senses; they were manifestly more suggestive, more graphic, more pictorial," hence "we see a close relationship between primitive words and poetry"; metaphor, too, "played a more prominent part in old times than now." The speech of modern savages abounds "in similes and all kinds of figurative phrases and allegorical expressions"; "poetic language is older than prosaic language." These being the characteristics of primitive language, the author concludes that it "had no great store of ideas, and if we consider it as an instrument for expressing thoughts, it was unwieldy and ineffectual." Emotions and instincts caused language: hunger and love produced germs of speech; it is useless to discuss which was the more powerful, but the author decides in favor of the latter. He agrees with Madvig and Whitney that communication of thought was the end of language, but says that they leave the impression that "these 'first framers of speech' were sedate, alderman-like citizens," and, according to Madvig, "women had no share in the creating of language." Now, according to the author's method of reasoning from the known to the unknown, one would naturally suppose that women had the largest share in the evolution of primitive speech, especially too as he agrees with Darwin that "the effort to charm the other sex" was the leading motive in this evolution. "Language," says he, "was born in the courting-days of mankind: the first utterance of speech I fancy to myself like something between the nightly love-lyrics of puss upon the tiles and the melodious love-songs of the nightingale" (p. 357). "Men sang out their feelings long before they were able to speak their thoughts. But they did not originally sing in order to communicate their ideas or feelings; in fact they had not the slightest notion that such a thing was possible" (p. 360). As primitive picture-writing developed into alphabetic writing, so with language. The conclusion is reached that "language began with half-musical unanalysed expressions for individual beings and events" (p. 365), and, while at first a clumsy and insufficient instrument, it gradually progressed in its evolution. Certainly many aeons must have been required.

I have thus endeavored to summarize, as fully as is consistent with a brief notice, the author's view as to the origin of language and his views as to the development of language in general. As to the former question, we must confess to being agnostics all, and while the author's theory is an interesting and ingenious speculation, we cannot concede that it has advanced the solution of the problem. As to the latter question, *on the author's method of reasoning* we get back to an inevitable *synthesis*, no matter how much he may dislike the word, and the logical conclusion is that language sprang into existence ready made, as Minerva from the brain of Jove, the whole paraphernalia in a fuller and, *pace* Jespersen, more perfect form than is shown in any existing language. This leads us to the old theory of the divine origin of language, and while the author does not even hint at such a result, it seems a legitimate conclusion from the principles and method of reasoning adopted. Who will advocate that view?

Little space is left to notice chapters VI-VIII, but they can be more briefly considered. Chapter VI discusses "English case-systems, old and modern," and the author classifies the cases according to "analogies of form," which he

terms "the morphological classification," and "resemblances of function," "the syntactical classification." He introduces a new term, *kernel*, for what some grammarians term *root* in distinction from *stem*; for example, *eag* is 'kernel,' *eagan* 'stem,' in Old English, but in Middle English *eie* is 'kernel,' "to which the ending *-n* is affixed in the nominative plural." The classification adopted is a difficult one for the memory, and may be regarded as a philosophical analysis of the declensions, useful indeed to one who knows the declensions already, but it is not to be supposed that any human being would ever adopt it as a means of learning the language. We cannot improve upon the usual arrangement for practical utility.

Chapter VII discusses "Case-shiftings in the pronouns" under the several heads of (1) relative attraction, (2) blendings, (3) anacoluthia, (4) influence from the nouns, (5) position, (6) phonetic influences, and is a useful collection of examples, arranged historically, of idiomatic and colloquial usages, some of which have been regarded by certain grammarians as ungrammatical. The accusative after *than* is pronounced to be "now so universal as to be considered the normal construction," not only in the inevitable *than whom*, but elsewhere. I would commend to would-be purists the author's examples of and remarks on *had rather* (pp. 226-7), although he does not seem to be familiar with Dr. Fitzedward Hall's valuable article "On the Origin of 'had rather go,' etc.," in this JOURNAL, II 281 (October, 1881). As to *it is me* he remarks (p. 237): "The stamp of vulgarity would have disappeared completely by now from the expression had it not been for grammar schools and school grammars; even to the most refined speakers *it's me* is certainly more natural than *it's I*." Jespersen is a strong upholder of colloquial English as illustrating progress in the language.

Chapter VIII presents a like collection of examples of "the English group genitive," arranged under six heads—attributive words, words in apposition, words connected by a preposition, defined by a following adverb, connected by a conjunction, and defined by a relative clause. These are discussed with a view to finding some common explanation of the forms, and three rules are deduced dependent upon the position of the governing word (p. 314). The appendix to this chapter discusses the expression 'Bill Stumps his mark,' which idiom had it not confined to English, but is found in other Germanic dialects also. The author questions Prof. Skeat's view (p. 323) that in "Heer beginnith the Chanouns yeman his tale," *tale* is to be taken as accusative, for "in most other mediaeval rubrics *begin* was taken intransitively." He refers very briefly to the well-known usage in the B-text of Layamon, *þe bissop his broþer*, etc., and says it "may be only another way of writing *bissopis* or *bissopes*." There is no doubt, to my mind, that this is the correct explanation, for we frequently find in Layamon *his* for *is*, 3d pers. sing., an early Cockneyism in the prefixing of *h*.

But I must close this notice with the expression of the hope that Prof. Jespersen will continue his investigations of special points in English grammar and will give us a systematic treatise on the subject. He has adopted the only fruitful way, the collection of historical examples and the deduction of conclusions from them by examination and comparison. There is no room for *a priori* reasoning in grammar. However much a certain expression may

run counter to our feeling for grammatical regularity, if it is the established usage of the language, it must be allowed. Grammarians cannot make language, but must take it as custom makes it, and Prof. Jespersen realizes this fully. Whether we shall call these changes 'progress' or not is another matter. I shall not quarrel with the term if he will give us the facts, and allow us to draw our own conclusions from them. He must not shut us up to endorsing his philosophy of the matter, but permit us to call it 'retrogression,' if we choose.

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Lateinische Schulgrammatik von W. DEECKE. Berlin, Calvary, 1893.
Erläuterungen zur Lateinischen Schulgrammatik, by the same.

There is no lack of Latin school-grammars in Germany, and the appearance of a new one is a matter of interest only as indicating new methods of presentation or new ideals in treatment. The present book is more noteworthy than usual by reason of the high standing of its author. Prof. Deecke has long been well known as an important student of Italian dialects, and has contributed not a little to the advancement of that department of Latin philology. As a grammarian in the usual acceptance of the term, he has been prominent only during the last few years; and this is his most important production, his previous work in this line having appeared in programmes, 'berichte' and reviews. His experience as a teacher stretches over a period of forty years, and the present embodiment of that experience takes in many ways the form of a protest against existing methods.

The writer of grammatical text-books now-a-days is confronted by the assertion on the part of many teachers, that no preliminary or school grammar should extend beyond the small size of, say, 200 pages; that a book of larger size is only confusing to the student and should be reserved for more advanced classes. Prof. Deecke works apparently upon this basis, for his grammar contains but 264 pages of large type. But the position is not sound. No parallel can be drawn between a grammar of Greek and Latin, and a preliminary text-book in a scientific subject; for in the latter case the text-book is at the same time the material and the instrument of study, while in the former the material is found in the authors read and the grammar is merely a help. Now, no general grammar of Latin, of only 200 pages, can be sufficient for the systematic study of any one Latin author. Hence in reading, either an edition must be used that supplements the grammar or renders it wholly superfluous, or the peculiarities of the author which give him his individuality and color his style must be unobserved. Such a grammar, while incomplete for the student, is even more so for the teacher, who is perforce driven to other treatises.

The most patent peculiarity of Deecke's grammar is that for which he claims especial credit in the preface—the consistent employment of a German terminology for all linguistic terms except *deponent*, *gerund* and *supine*. Every one will admit that the present grammatical terminology is in many respects defective, and in some cases absolutely meaningless. The temptation to contrive a new and better system is an old one, and one to which many